

REMARKS

Please reconsider this application in view of the above amendments and following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that dependent claim 5 contains allowable subject matter and for carefully reconsidering this application.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-6 and 10-12 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 2 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claims 1 and 2.

Claim Amendments

Claims 1-6 and 10-12 have been amended in this reply to clarify the present invention and to correct errors, and claims 7-9 have been cancelled. Specifically, claims 1 and 2 have been amended to include having an endless base part attached around the high-tensile-strength belt and a plurality of tread lugs formed on an outer periphery of the base part. This limitation was formerly recited in dependent claim 6. Claims 1 and 2 have also been amended to include having the belt being thin, compared with the base part. This limitation is recited in paragraph [0025] of the specification filed herewith. Further, claims 1-6 and 10-12 have been amended to remove the numerical references to the elements of the present application. Furthermore, claims 7-9, which were previously withdrawn in response to a Restriction Requirement, have been cancelled in this reply. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of these claims in a subsequently filed divisional application. Accordingly, no new matter has been added by this reply, as support for these amendments may be found within the originally filed claim set and application.

Specification Amendments

The abstract has been amended in this reply to remove the numerical references to the elements of the present application, to remove the reference to the Figures, and to remove the “means to solve” language. These amendments are to correct the format of the abstract from containing legal terms and any references to the figures. Further, the specification has been amended in this reply in paragraphs [0009], [0010], [0024], [0028], [0035], [0036], [0038], [0043], [0046], [0051], [0054], [0055], and [0056]. These amendments are to correct translation errors and misspellings that were provided with the originally filed application, in addition to correct the arrangement of the specification. Accordingly, Applicant notes that these amendments are fully supported by the originally filed application and no new matter has been added.

Drawing Objections

The drawings were objected to by the Examiner because each of the drawings lacked proper headings. In response, each of the drawings have been amended in this reply to now recite the proper headings, (*e.g.*, FIG. 1), rather than reciting the headings in Japanese. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection to the drawings.

Specification Objections

The abstract of the disclosure was objected to for having improper format and for containing legal terms. In response, Applicant has removed the numerical references within the abstract, has removed the references to any Figures, and has removed the “means to solve” language. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the suggested amendments to the abstract.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection to the abstract.

Further, the specification is objected to for containing improper headings and improper arrangement. In response, Applicant has amended the specification to follow the guidelines and preferred layout as illustrated on pages 4 and 5 of the Office Action. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the suggested amendments to the specification. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection to the specification.

Further, the specification is objected to for containing informalities with regards to paragraph [0060] and for the limitation "shielding brim(s)" consistently appearing throughout the specification. In response, Applicant has cancelled paragraph [0060] and amended the specification to correctly recite the limitation "shielding flange(s)" rather than the limitation "shielding brim(s)." Applicant thanks the Examiner for the suggested amendments to the specification. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection to the specification.

Claim Objections

Claim 6 was objected to for containing informalities. Specifically, claim 6 was objected to for not containing the word "the" in front of the term "height" in line 4, and for misspelling the term "planar." In response, Applicant has corrected both of these informalities. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the suggested amendments to claim 6. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection to claim 6.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 5-6, 10, and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Claims 5-6, 10, and 12 have been amended in this reply. To the extent that this rejection applies these claims as amended, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

With respect to claim 5, the Examiner asserts that it is unclear what element of the invention is being referred to by the phrase "shielding brim(s)." In response, Applicant has amended claim 5, in addition to the specification, to recite "shielding flanges" instead of "shielding brims." This amendment is to correct translation errors provided from the originally filed application. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

With respect to claim 6, the Examiner asserts that the limitation of "its," appearing in line 6 of claim 6, is unclear as to what element of the invention is being referred to. In response, Applicant has amended claim 6 to recite "the thickness of said thread lugs," rather than recite "its thickness." Further, with respect to claim 6, the Examiner asserts that the limitation "said base part" in lines 3-4 lacks antecedent basis. In response, Applicant has added the limitation of "an endless base part" in claim 2, from which claim 6 depends. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of these rejections.

With respect to claims 10 and 12, the Examiner asserts that the limitation of "the high-tensile-strength belt is exposed" is indefinite because it is unclear as to what element is being claimed by the limitation. In response, this limitation has been cancelled from claims 10 and 12. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 and 10-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,953,921 ("Burns"). Independent claim 1 has been amended in this reply. To the extent that this rejection applies to independent claim 1 as amended, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites a crawler belt including an endless high-tensile-strength belt of a plate and a belt main body made of elastic material and attached to an outer periphery of the high-tensile-strength belt. The high-tensile-strength belt includes engagement holes arranged at even intervals in a circumferential direction thereof, the engagement holes being to engage with engagement projections of a wheel. The belt main body integrally includes an endless base part attached all around an outer periphery of the high-tensile-strength belt and a plurality of tread lugs formed spacedly on an outer periphery of the base part. The high-tensile-strength belt is thin, compared with the base part, and the base part covering the engagement holes and having escape recesses is formed at locations corresponding to the engagement holes of the high-tensile-strength belt, the escape recesses being to receive the engagement projections of the wheel.

Burns discloses, particularly in Figures 3 and 4, a track assembly 13 having a track wheel 25 and an endless track 27 fitted onto the track wheel 25. The endless track 27 includes an endless flexible band 33 having an outer face 35 and an inner face 37. Though flexible, the endless band 33 is also longitudinally inextensible so as to resist undue stretching. Elongated tread elements 41 are then provided on the outer face 35 of the endless track 27. Further, fastening means 49 are used at *selected locations* to secure the tread elements 41 to the endless band 33.

However, Applicant respectfully asserts that Burns fails to teach all of the elements of independent claim 1, as amended. Specifically, claim 1 requires the belt main body to integrally include an endless base part attached *all around* an outer periphery of the high-tensile-strength belt. For example, as shown in Figures 3 and 5 of the present application, the crawler belt 20 includes a high-tensile-strength belt 21 with a belt main body 22 attached to an outer periphery thereof. This belt main body 22 then integrally includes an endless base part 23, in which the base part 23 is attached *all around an outer periphery* of the high-tensile-strength belt 21. In Burns, though, assuming that the endless flexible band 33 and the elongated tread elements 41 are recognized as the high-tensile-strength belt and the belt main body of the present invention, respectively, the elongated tread elements 41 are only attached to the endless flexible band 33 *at selected locations* therebetween, using the fastening means 49. As such, Burns fails to show or suggest having the belt main body integrally include the endless base part attached *all around* an outer periphery of the high-tensile-strength belt, as required by claim 1.

Further, claim 1 additionally requires the endless base part to have escape recesses formed therein, in which the escape recesses receive the engagement projections from the wheel. For example, as shown in Figures 3 and 4, the endless base part 23 of the crawler belt 20 has escape recesses 23a formed therein. These escape recesses 23a correspond to the locations of the engagement projections 12a of the wheel 10. As such, the engagement projections 12a of the wheel 10 may project into the escape recesses 23a of the endless base part 23, in which the escape recesses 23a may be used to secure the crawler belt 20 to the wheel 10 and may also prevent any residue or debris from entering the crawler belt 20. In Burns, though, the track assembly 13 is only secured to the wheel 25 using friction, rather than using any fastening means to secure the track assembly 13 to the wheel 25. As such, Burns fails to show

or suggest the endless base part having escape recesses formed therein, in which the escape recesses receive the engagement projections from the wheel, as required by claim 1.

In view of the above, Burns fails to teach each limitation recited in independent claim 1, as amended. Thus, independent claim 1 is patentable over Burns. Dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2, 3, 6, and 12

Claims 2, 3, 6, and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Burns in view of France Patent No. FR 1,013,382 ("Plante"). Independent claim 2 has been amended in this reply. To the extent that this rejection applies to independent claim 2 as amended, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 2 recites a crawler unit having a plurality of wheels disposed separately in a front and rear direction and a crawler belt trained about the wheels. The crawler belt includes an endless high-tensile-strength belt of a plate and a belt main body made of elastic material and attached to an outer periphery of the high-tensile-strength belt. The high-tensile-strength belt has engagement holes arranged at even intervals in a circumferential direction thereof. The belt main body integrally includes an endless base part attached all around an outer periphery of the high-tensile-strength belt and a plurality of tread lugs formed spacedly on an outer periphery of the base part. Further, the high-tensile-strength belt is thin, compared with the base part, and the base part covers the engagement holes and has escape recesses formed at locations corresponding to the engagement holes of the high-tensile-strength belt. The driving wheel of

the plurality of wheels has engagement projections arranged at even intervals in a circumferential direction on an outer peripheral surface thereof. The engagement projections are then adapted to be engaged with the engagement holes of the high-tensile-strength belt of the crawler belt and at the same time enter the escape recesses of the belt main body.

However, as similar to claim 1, Burns fails to teach all of the elements of independent claim 2, as amended. Specifically, as with claim 1, claim 2 also requires that the belt main body to integrally include an endless base part attached *all around* an outer periphery of the high-tensile-strength belt. However, as described above with respect to claim 1, Burns fails to show or suggest having this requirement of claim 2. Further, Plante, which the Examiner only asserts as showing a drive wheel having projections to engage recesses in an endless track, does not teach that which Burns lacks with respect to claim 1. Particularly, Plante also fails to show or suggest having the belt main body integrally include the endless base part attached *all around* an outer periphery of the high-tensile-strength belt, as required by claim 2.

In view of the above, Burns and Plante, whether considered separately or in combination, fail to show or suggest all limitations of independent claim 2. Dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 4

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Burns in view of Plante, and further in view of United Kingdom Patent No. GB 2,138,534 ("Tangorra"). Independent claim 2, from which claim 4 depends, has been amended in this

reply. To the extent that this rejection applies to this claim as amended, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, Burns and Plante fail to show or suggest all limitations of independent claim 2. Further, Tangorra does not teach that which Burns and Plante lack. This is evidenced by the fact that Tangorra is only relied upon for teaching the use of both the engagement holes and escape recesses having a generally semi-spherical shape. In view of the above, Burns, Plante, and Tangorra, whether considered separately or in combination, fail to show or suggest all limitations of claim 4. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 12088/044001).

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Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments